

# WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,  
and workers in the District of Columbia*

*Friday, September 3, 2004*

## MPDC, DCPS ANNOUNCE SCHOOL SAFETY MEASURES

As the 2004-05 school year gets under way, the DC Public Schools and MPDC joined Mayor Williams this week in announcing a number of new steps—including additional resources, increased communications and a more proactive strategy—to help ensure the safety of students, faculty and staff. The MPDC is increasing the number of School Resource Officers (SROs) from 72 to 99, ensuring at least one SRO is assigned to every senior high, junior high and middle school, with some schools receiving several SROs, based on an MPDC risk analysis. The Department is also increasing from five to 14 the number of sergeants assigned full time to the schools to provide supervision of SROs and greater coordination. Chief Ramsey stressed that the increase in personnel in the schools will not reduce the number of officers assigned to neighborhood patrols; the additional SROs are being reassigned from other non-patrol duties. DCPS also announced a more coordinated plan for deploying its security personnel, dividing security into eight sectors, with each sector containing approximately 18-20 schools and a dedicated supervisor and security investigator. Youth gang officers are also being assigned to certain senior high schools. Other elements of the strategy include enhanced training for SROs and security personnel, improved information-sharing and greater coordination with neighborhood patrols. Longer range, DCPS and MPDC are working cooperatively on the transition of school security management from the schools to the police. Because contract security personnel will continue to be used following the transfer of responsibility, the two agencies are working on a Request for Proposal for a new security contract, to be overseen by the MPDC when it is executed later this school year.

- ① Expanded truancy and curfew enforcement are also part of this year's school safety initiative. For more information about DC's teen curfew, which begins at 11 pm on weeknights for young people under age 17, visit:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/family/curfew.shtm>

- ① Learn more about school safety and the resources available to students, parents and staff at:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/family/schoolbus.shtm>

## DC LAUNCHES DRIVER FEEDBACK SIGNALS IN SCHOOL ZONES

Standing outside Bowen Elementary School in Southwest, Mayor Williams this week threw the switch to activate the first permanent school-based “driver feedback” signal in the District. The devices, installed by the District Department of Transportation, will operate during school hours to electronically display vehicle speeds in school zones. In the initial phase, 16 signals will be installed, with at least one school in each ward covered. At five of these locations, the signals will be evaluated to determine if they slow traffic in school zones and reduce traffic conflicts involving vehicles and pedestrians. Vehicle speeds, traffic conflicts and other indicators will be observed before and after the installation of the signals. The driver feedback signals are designed to complement the existing signs and pavement markings near all DC schools. After the test, driver feedback signals could be installed at additional locations throughout the city. The DDOT signals are in addition to portable SMART (or Speed Monitoring Awareness Radar Trailer) machines that the MPDC has in every police district. These devices also measure a motorist's speed and display it, along with the speed limit in that area. None of the machines generate tickets.

- ① Motorists are reminded that the speed limit in school zones in DC is 15 mph.

- ① For information on traffic and pedestrian safety around school buses, visit:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/family/schoolbus.shtm>

## CITYWIDE CRIME REDUCTION CONTINUES IN AUGUST

The number of serious crimes reported in DC declined by approximately 20 percent in August, continuing the downward trend in crime for the year, according to preliminary statistics from the MPDC. When compared with August 2003, there were reductions last month in every major crime category except robbery, which rose 6 percent. Homicides declined by nearly one-third in August, assaults with a deadly weapon declined 22 percent, and auto thefts fell by 24 percent. Overall, violent crime was down 11 percent in August, and property crime decreased 22 percent, according to preliminary citywide data. Crime was down in all seven police districts in August 2004, when compared with August 2003. Through the first 8 months of 2004, serious crime in DC was down 12 percent overall, including a 15 percent reduction in violent crime. All major crime categories are showing decreases this year, including a 26 percent drop in homicides and a 32 percent reduction in sexual assaults. All seven police districts are experiencing an overall reduction in crime through the first eight months of the year, with the Sixth District posting a 23 percent reduction for the January-August time period.

- ① Preliminary 2004 crime statistics for each of the seven police districts and the city as a whole can be reviewed at:  
[http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/crstats\\_readthis.shtml](http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/crstats_readthis.shtml)

## CHIEF RAMSEY, BILL COSBY DISCUSS YOUTH CRIME ISSUES, SOLUTIONS

During his monthly “Ask the Chief” program on WTOP radio, Chief Ramsey takes phone calls from area residents interested in discussing a variety of public safety issues. But during his program on September 2, the Chief spent more than 30 minutes on a single call probing the causes of, and solutions to, the problem of youth crime. The caller was comedian and social commentator Bill Cosby. Earlier this year, while traveling in DC, Cosby heard the Chief discussing youth crime and parental responsibility on WTOP. Cosby has said that it was the Chief’s comments that were partly responsible for his increased focus on the problem of youth crime – not just in DC, but also in smaller communities such as Irvington, New Jersey. During the discussion, the two men explored a number of issues, but repeatedly returned to the theme of parental responsibility in raising children and, consequently, helping to reduce youth crime and victimization. “Behavior has to change. Responsibility for your own behavior has to change,” said Chief Ramsey. “We have people who just let TV and video games and music raise their kids and instill the values that they ought to be instilling in their children. And then we wonder why we have a problem.”

- ① To listen to the entire September “Ask the Chief” program, visit the WTOP website at:  
<http://wtop.com/?sid=120214&nid=321>
- ① Chief Ramsey participates in a number of interactive radio, television and online programs. For more details, visit:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/media/media.shtml>

## NEWS & NOTES

**Nominate an Outstanding DC Government Employee.** The 5th Annual Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Awards Program for Distinguished DC Government Employees is looking to recognize and reward the best performers in District Government. Residents, community and business stakeholders, civic organizations and government employees are encouraged to nominate an outstanding MPDC member or other DC employee. Five winners will be awarded \$7,500 each. For more information and a nomination form, visit <http://www.cafritzawards.org>.

**MPDC Officer Takes Home the Gold.** Officer Ramon Colon, of the MPDC’s Vehicle Skills Unit, received four gold medals and three bronze during the recent International Law Enforcement and Fire Fighters Games in Las Vegas. Officer Colon excelled in several mountain bike categories, including overall best rider, in the 45-49 age category. More than 5,000 athletes from countries around the globe participated in the games. Congratulations, Officer Colon!

**New “PSA Finder” Feature.** The MPDC has teamed up with the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) to create a new feature through the MPDC website that allows residents to easily identify their Police Service Area (or PSA). Through OCTO’s “DC Guide,” visitors can enter their address and bring up not only their PSA, but also a wide range of resources in their neighborhood. With the recent realignment of the PSA boundaries, this feature should be particularly valuable to residents who may not be familiar with their new PSA. To access the feature, click on the “DC Guide” link on <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/districts.shtml>.

### DATA BOX

#### Homicides (as of 9/3/04)

- 2004: 128
- 2003: 173
- % Change: -26.0%
- Closure Rate: 56.3% (72 closures)

#### Adult Arrests (week end. 8/28/04)

- Total: 988
- Drugs: 157
- Weapons: 27
- Motor Vehicle Theft: 22
- Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 40

#### Firearm Recoveries (as of 9/1/04)

- September: 5
- August: 157
- 2004 Total: 1,364

#### Traffic Fatalities (as of 9/3/04)

- 2004: 36
- 2003: 47
- % Change: -23.4%

**Information, ideas, or comments about this service?** Send an e-mail to **KEVIN MORISON**, MPDC’s Director of Corporate Communications, at [kevin.morison@dc.gov](mailto:kevin.morison@dc.gov). Would you like to have this information e-mailed to you? Just go to our Website and register with **Crimereports.com**.

**mpdc.dc.gov**